

The 200,000 Acre Solution: Supporting and Enhancing A Rural Economy For Loudoun's 21st Century

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Rural Economic Development Task Force

Final Report Presented to the Loudoun Board of Supervisors

Introduction

Loudoun County's Comprehensive Plans long have encouraged the maintenance of a rural economy, concentrating on traditional agricultural pursuits, and consistently have stated as a goal the maintenance of Western Loudoun as a largely rural area. The extent to which the County's implementing ordinances and standards adequately advance these policies is, of necessity, a matter requiring in-depth analysis going well beyond the scope of the Rural Economic Development Task Force's efforts. Certain of the recommendations contained in this report, however, may require legislative action on either state or County levels, or both. The full nature and extent of such legislative action, where required, should be promptly addressed by the County.

As a first order of business, the Task Force adopted as its goal the development of a plan to, at a minimum, double the value of Loudoun's rural economy in a decade. Near the end of that decade-in 2007-we will observe a major anniversary for both Loudoun County (250th) and for Virginia (400th). It seems wholly fitting that by 2007 we will have secured the rural economy as an important component of Loudoun's overall economic profile and assured its continuation. It is fully recognized that such a goal is highly aggressive, but the Task Force believes the rural economy to be so important to the overall future of Loudoun County that such aggressiveness is demanded.

Why Promote a Rural Economy?

The Task Force squarely faced the issue of whether it is in the best interests of Loudoun County to grow its rural economy. The answer is a resounding "yes"-both from an economic perspective and in terms of Loudoun's quality of life for its citizens.

If Loudoun County takes the appropriate actions-beginning right now-we believe that the most profitable years for our agricultural lands could still lie ahead. Loudoun's unique combination of 200,000 acres of rural land, with easy access to Washington Dulles International Airport and the nation's capital, gives us distinct marketing advantages into the 21st Century.

As a matter of sound fiscal policy, a thriving rural economy will continue to be a net revenue generator for the County. The taxes paid by a low-density, strong, rural economy will exceed the cost of services provided. This cannot be said about residential build-out. While there may be some differences of opinion as to exact numbers, past studies clearly have shown residential development to be a deficit consumer of revenue-i.e., costs to the County of supporting residential needs generally exceed the tax revenue generated by the residential development-while rural lands generate net revenues to the County. By retaining or increasing such net revenues through the expansion of our rural economy, the entire County benefits.

As a matter of enhancing the quality of life in Loudoun County, there is an emerging consensus that the attributes commonly associated with a thriving rural economy are preferable to those resulting from a residential build-out at A-3 grid development density patterns. The County's own 1997 Survey of Loudoun County Residents clearly indicates this preference. Seventy-six percent of the respondents expressed their belief that the pace of residential growth in Loudoun County is too fast, and 55 percent identified growth and development as the biggest problem facing the County. In terms of what is the best thing about Loudoun County, almost one-third of these same respondents cited its rural and open country assets, and more than 10 percent rated as the "best" thing its beauty and scenic views. While the survey did not report respondents' second choices for "best," it is clear that there is strong citizen recognition of those assets which a strong rural economy can protect and preserve.

As a matter of market economics, the rural economy is an extremely attractive asset. The Agricultural Census for Loudoun in 1992, the last year for which final statistics currently exist, reported that gross agricultural sales (not net income) totaled more than \$53 million in the following categories (see also Appendix B):

- Agricultural products \$26.7 M
- Horticultural products \$10.9 M
- Livestock \$15.8 M

It is important to understand what these figures do not include:

- Rural businesses
- Rural tourism
- The various businesses supporting agricultural production
- The equine industry, which alone generates private sector economic input of more than \$75 million per year in equine services, based on the latest available data (see [Appendix G](#))
- The horticulture industry, which generates an additional \$11 million per year in service-related businesses.

As a matter of economic development and natural resource protection, the highest and most fiscally prudent and most profitable long-term uses for the agricultural lands of Loudoun County are dependent upon continued and technologically more innovative agricultural and other rural enterprises.

Growth opportunities abound in Loudoun's agricultural sector:

- Loudoun beef producers-with proper marketing and promotion and the availability of processing facilities-could receive retail prices for livestock products, yet often have to depend on the vagaries of the open market.
- Loudoun hay producers could supply hay to all of the nearly 20,000 horses living in the County, yet many horse owners purchase elsewhere because they have quality concerns or simply cannot easily find the needed quantity locally.
- Loudoun Christmas tree producers, perhaps the best-organized of the agricultural producers, have seen steadily increasing sales, yet by 2000 they will face a shortage of available trees for sale, resulting in their missing out on nearly \$1 million in retail sales.

- Commonwealth of Virginia wine industry leaders forecast that 450 new acres of grapes are needed to meet projected demand. Ranked fourth in the state in wine production, Loudoun offers opportunities to meet a significant part of the projected growth in grape production.
- Nursery-grown trees are in high demand in the developing communities, yet most commercial landscapers provide trees and shrubs that are grown elsewhere, mainly because Loudoun does not offer an adequate supply. Large landscape trees cannot be transplanted economically unless grown close to the user, yet Loudoun has only a few growers, and no competition for the large shade tree market.
- Loudoun fruit and vegetable growers cannot supply or service all of the requests for farmers' markets in the developing areas of the County; nor are they able to meet the demands of large retailers for locally grown products.
- Biotechnology offers new crops and new methods. Loudoun's proximity to the nation's capital makes it the ideal location for demonstration sites. The growing natural medicine market opens new demands and possibilities for crop diversification and higher profits.

These are but a few of the windows of opportunity opening for Loudoun agriculture in the coming decade. These are the types of opportunities which lead the Rural Economic Development Task Force to believe that the most profitable years for Loudoun's agricultural lands lie ahead.

Growth of the rural economy can occur without the same scale of offsetting investment requirements associated with more intensive economic development. The County's own recent study of the positive economic impact of the WorldCom development proposal highlights the capital requirements generated by such intensive economic growth: schools, housing, roads, and other public infrastructure, all of which consume a significant portion of the tax revenue generated by the business operation. There are proportionately far less offsetting capital requirements involved with the growth of the rural economy, and consequently, a proportionately larger net revenue generation for the County.

The answer, then, to the question of why Loudoun County should promote a rural economy becomes relatively simple: it is a desirable alternative which makes economic sense for the County overall, which the citizens/taxpayers favor, and from which the farmers potentially can derive adequate income to retain agriculture as a viable life choice.

What Constitutes the Rural Economy?

Loudoun's rural economy is based on approximately 200,000 acres of land zoned for agricultural-residential uses. Situated generally to the north, west and south of Loudoun County's developed urban and suburban areas, this geographical area encompasses seven incorporated towns. It contains a wide array of agricultural enterprises, all of Loudoun's major tourist attractions, many home-based businesses, wineries, retail and service establishments, some light industry, and a variety of other enterprises. A statistical profile of agricultural and business components of the rural economy is provided in Appendix B of this report. Additional information on rural tourism is provided in [Appendix H](#).

The components of the rural economy can be divided into three general categories, each highly interrelated and each, in large part, dependent on the other:

- Agriculture, Horticulture, and Animal Husbandry
- Tourism
- Business (including retail, service, and light manufacturing and assembly establishments)

Each of these categories offers growth opportunities and economic development opportunities. The growth of each must be with a recognition of their interrelationships and the need to maintain the balance in which each can prosper without impinging on the economic viability of the other. This is a major challenge facing Loudoun.

Guiding Assumptions for the Task Force's Recommendations

The Rural Economic Development Task Force began its efforts with full recognition that it was to focus on economic development issues. This was not to be another land use study. It quickly became apparent, however, that rural economy issues and land use were inseparable. Unless the best, most appropriate land is reserved for rural enterprises, in part by curtailing residential development, there can be neither sustainability of the current rural economy nor growth of its various components. We are facing the critical decision point in Loudoun as to whether our agricultural areas devolve into bedroom communities which cannot support themselves, thus further draining the County's coffers, or whether we retain those lands as productive economic entities generating surplus revenues for Loudoun while protecting and enhancing the quality of life of its citizens. It is a crisis which is not necessarily of our own making.

The severe economic problems spreading across Southeast Asia, Japan, and Russia have resulted in a dramatic decline in world commodity prices for such agricultural products as corn, wheat, soybeans, porkbellies and cattle. These economic problems arise from massive foreign debt and crumbling banking systems-problems which may take years for resolution. Since most agricultural product prices are set on a global trading basis, Loudoun's farmers will be adversely affected whether or not they have direct involvement in export programs. At the same time we are facing in this country the removal of all Federal farm price supports over the next five to ten-year period.

The United States Department of Agriculture, in its January 1998 Report of the USDA National Commission of Small Farms, points out that two decades of national policies have perpetuated a structural bias toward greater concentration of assets in larger farms and larger agribusiness firms. Historically, federal farm programs, tax policies and federal labor laws have most benefitted large farms. America's small farms, on which day-to-day labor and management are provided by the farmer, are caught in a trend which has widened the gap between what farmers receive for production and what consumers pay.

Thus, at a critical moment for the very survival of our rural economy, the financial viability of the traditional Loudoun farm is more in question than ever before. This clearly increases the pressure on the owner/operator of the farm to sell the land to the highest offeror-and that most often is to the residential developer. As neighboring counties continue to limit or control the rate of residential construction and subdivision approval, we may find Loudoun's rural acreage subjected to far greater pressures for conversion to residential use on a scale inappropriate to the rural environment.

Based on these economic facts of life, the Task Force proceeded on the assumption that immediate action is required if we are to maintain a viable rural economy. At the same time, it was clearly realized that the burden of maintaining the basic land

assets necessary for the rural economy could not be placed solely on the landowner: that for most farmers to maintain any traditional agricultural pursuits with the accompanying large tracts of undeveloped land, there must be reasonable profit possibilities and a reasonable return on one's efforts and investments.

It was also recognized that a significant portion of agricultural land and open space is not currently profitable, but is cared for and maintained by its owners as part of their life style. There is concern that if the overall quality of life in Loudoun gives way to overwhelming development, then those land stewards-who are willing to spend their own resources to live a rural life in Loudoun-will disappear. For those stewards of the land who choose to live in and maintain a rural setting, there is currently little in the way of assurances that the rural setting will not be usurped by development, nor that residential densities will not intrude upon and interfere with agricultural operations. This uncertainty may, of itself, generate the impetus to sell the land and move on to areas where some protection may exist.

We must provide incentives to both groups of land owners-sufficient income to the farmer and some assurances to the land stewards that their investments in quality of life are valued to others.

The Task Force worked with the clear assumption that the building of a more prosperous rural economy will require County-wide support. There must be outreach to all segments of Loudoun's population in order to gain the reliable public support which is critical to the success of the recommended actions. Public support is vital if we are to protect the rural resource base necessary to foster a meaningful rural economy.

Recommendations were forged in light of the assumption that it is preferable to use incentive "carrots" to achieve policy results rather than "sticks" in the nature of prohibitions or penalties wherever possible. Most importantly, it was assumed that the most effective implementation of rural economic incentives would be achieved through a mix of public and private initiatives-that neither the private sector, nor the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, could implement a wholly effective program alone.

Finally, the Rural Economic Development Task Force agreed that there must be an ongoing citizens' effort to assist in and expedite the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

A Rural Economy for the 21st Century

Loudoun's unique combination of 200,000 acres of rural land, with easy access to Washington Dulles International Airport and the nation's capital, gives us distinct marketing advantages for a rural economy well into the 21st Century. These very advantages, however, expose us to the greatest risk of having our rural economy disappear among new bedrooms.

The Task Force has arranged its recommendations in three general classifications representing the major objectives to be obtained by their implementation:

- Greater profitability of farming
- New initiatives to increase the rural economy
- Securing the natural resource base

It must be recognized that many of the recommendations contained in this report are interrelated or interdependent, and that the implementation of one without the others almost certainly would be fruitless. Further, recommendations may have significant impacts on objectives other than those to which it is assigned for presentation purposes. For this reason, the reader is encouraged to view the recommendations as a single economic development program, and to make no

conclusion as to a single recommendation without carefully considering its role in, or impact on, the economic development plan as a whole.

I. Recommendations to Help Farm with Greater Profitability, Targeted to Enterprises with the Highest Potential for Expanding the Rural Economy in a Decade

Provide opportunities for rural "recapitalization"

One of the issues facing farmers engaged in larger scale agricultural operations is the limited availability of capital to finance annual cropping, or for expansion or upgrade of operations. To some extent, this has come about as a result of more stringent Federal standards for bank loans and the emphasis on repayment from a definite income stream. This has sometimes led to the inability of the farmer to upgrade operations or to finance his entry into new agricultural markets. Financing can become a greater problem as farmers are encouraged to invest in new crops and methods, particularly where market development or production may not occur until more than one year in the future. Clearly, this is the case with such investments as orchards, vineyards, nursery stock, trees, and small fruit farming.

The County should help facilitate new forms of rural financing and encourage traditional lending sources to continue their support to agricultural enterprises

Significant changes in Federal requirements, as well as commercial practices of a more consolidated banking industry, have created a crisis in agricultural financing. The farmer's major asset-equity in the land-will no longer secure operational financing. Certainty of an income stream to support full repayment within a single fiscal period has become the single most critical factor. The fact that farm income is subject to a number of factors outside the farmer's control-weather, commodity prices, productivity, etc.-has led to very conservative judgements of income stream adequacy. The focus on single fiscal year financing has made it difficult to establish multi-year crops which offer no return within the fiscal year. Banks, as a rule, apply standard commercial lending criteria to applications for agricultural loans without recognizing the special needs and economics of agriculture.

Facing an inability to finance ongoing agricultural activity, the farmer is left with no choice but to recognize land equity by selling part of the farm in order to sustain a living. The lack of adequate financing severely limits options to move from existing crops to more profitable, multi-year products.

The County should provide valuable assistance in financing agricultural operations through the development of an agricultural lending program with community banks or consortia, making agricultural lending a mandatory criterion for the placement of County funds with a bank. A similar program currently exists for affordable housing. Utilizing the professional skills available in the County's economic development department, the County should assist those citizens involved in, or wishing to become involved in, rural agribusiness in exploring innovative lending vehicles such as United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) intermediary re-lending loan programs and risk leveraging mechanisms. In enterprises where investment will likely result in an increase in the agricultural economic base, the County should carefully consider the use of tax credits on real property taxes to incentivize capital investment and expansion.

The creation of a dedicated rural economic development function within Loudoun County government can provide a likely resource to encourage and facilitate new avenues of venture capital financing in rural economic enterprises and in the emerging areas of biotechnical agriculture, or "pharming".

Support agricultural activities which have the highest potential for expansion

Economic growth, through the encouragement of alternative types of agriculture, assistance in identifying innovative agriculture-related economic initiatives and specialty markets, and facilitating entrance into the emerging biotechnology marketplace, is a critical component of increasing farm profitability.

While the recommendations contained in this section are largely dependent on private initiatives and the direct participation of the owners/operators of the affected agricultural enterprise, the County should encourage, even incentivize, and support their implementation. By increasing agriculture's profitability, current operators are more likely to continue or grow such operations, and new operators can be encouraged to enter the agricultural economy.

Focus commercial agriculture on high-value crops for which there is strong market demand and high producer profits

In many instances, higher farm profitability rests with multi-year horticultural crops such as wine grapes, Christmas trees, nursery stock, small fruit, tree fruit, and greenhouse or field-grown specialty produce. The County should provide assistance in conducting market research to determine the high-value products for which there is sufficient consumer demand and enterprise profitability to justify production entry. Illustrative data relevant to agricultural growth areas offering significant profit potential is presented in [Appendix C](#).

The County should encourage the creation of a demonstration farm showcasing new crops and new production methods, so that farmers can readily assess the production potential of these new crops, and consumers can sample the produce. Federal, state and grant funding should be sought to support this endeavor. By demonstrating the efficacy of new crops and new methods, a significant part of the risk to the farmer is removed, and, to some extent, market establishment has begun. Further, the County should encourage the use of existing farms as demonstration farms or the conversion to more profitable multi-year crops by such means as tax abatement or tax deferral.

Access new markets and new methods to increase existing market penetration for rural products

Loudoun's proximity to major metropolitan areas and the Federal government, its growing tourism industry, and its access to major transportation hubs suggest strong markets in which Loudoun's role is currently far less than its potential.

Facilitate the establishment of an agricultural cooperative to access new markets and new methods, and to increase penetration into existing markets

Among the major problems facing Loudoun's traditional farmers, as well as those creating alternative agriculture operations, are the lack of professional marketing

support, the cost of major equipment, and in many instances, the lack of an economical delivery or distribution system. An agricultural cooperative would provide an opportunity to increase access to technical and marketing assistance for traditional agricultural products such as cattle and hay, and to cooperatively market these traditional products on a more effective and economical basis.

The County should facilitate the establishment of a central farm product distribution hub where farmers can deliver products for pick-up by consumers or wholesalers by providing County-owned land for its location. Sales and marketing out of such a distribution hub would be managed and coordinated by the cooperative. At the same time, the cooperative would coordinate with neighboring counties to exchange information in support of regional cooperative marketing and other issues of importance to the regional rural community.

Working with the cooperative, the County should provide professional support to expand brand identification of products of the Loudoun Valleys and to promote increased sales of such products. Clearly the Loudoun Tourism Council should be an active partner in this effort. By providing professional support to the cooperative, and in coordination with marketing staff of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the County may greatly increase Loudoun producers' access to specialty groceries, restaurants, and international markets.

The County currently has extensive electronic systems capacity and capability. It should consider making those capabilities available to the cooperative for the creation of an electronic commerce network to serve the common marketing needs of the rural economy (see [Appendix E](#)).

Provide targeted technical assistance and linkage to appropriate public and private organizations and resources, with an initial priority directed to existing agricultural enterprises

The County should recognize the importance of the rural economy by the creation or expansion of an organization specifically targeted toward increasing the rural economy

The County should create access to technical production and marketing assistance to provide entrepreneurial leadership, education, demonstration and marketing skills necessary to achieve real growth in existing agricultural enterprises. This could be accomplished through an expansion of the current agricultural arm of the County's economic development department, or through the creation of a separate, dedicated, rural economic development department or agency. This entity should serve as the coordinating agent for state and Federal assistance available to farming, both to minimize duplication and to assure utilization of all programs which can support and further the rural economy.

The rural economic development agency should create a centralized "labor exchange" to match farm labor needs with available work force. It should also assist with the exploration of cooperative opportunities for purchase, such as liability insurance, health and medical insurance, or commodities which can produce meaningful savings if purchased in larger bulk.

Encourage the leasing of unused farm acreage for agricultural purposes

The County should immediately organize a Land Lease Data Bank so owners of potential farm acreage who do not currently farm can list land for lease to potential farmers. The County should encourage such listing by making land held for agricultural lease eligible for the most advantageous Land Use Tax enrollment.

Look to the future by encouraging young people to seek a career in agriculture

Through its rural economic development function, in cooperation with Loudoun County schools, 4-H, and other civic organizations, the County should encourage young citizens to enter the agricultural field by implementing programs such as Virginia Farm Bureau's "Ag in the Classroom" program and the national "Future Farmers of America" program.

Eliminate unnecessary or inappropriate regulatory burdens imposed on the rural economy

This report will subsequently address the problems of urban standards and administrative burdens imposed on rural initiatives - which discourage the use of development alternatives that will protect and promote the rural economy - and the need to take corrective action in these areas. There are additional regulatory burdens which serve no real public purpose in the rural setting, but which impinge on orderly agricultural operations as shown in [Appendix D](#). For example, there is the difficulty faced by farmers in clearing and grading fence rows or improving drainage, where a grading permit is required by the County. This is an unnecessary administrative action, contributes to delays, and additional expense.

Review all existing legal and administrative requirements to determine their appropriateness for a rural economy

The County should undertake a thorough review of its policies, regulations and ordinances to identify and correct any and all regulations which serve no legitimate public purpose, while compromising farm profitability or unreasonably increasing the costs of maintaining a bona fide rural enterprise.

Encourage farmers/ landowners to maintain or rehabilitate farm labor housing

A major problem facing agricultural endeavors in Loudoun is the scarcity of labor, which, in turn, arises from the lack of affordable housing in the County. At the same time, tenant housing on a farm property is assessed and taxed at its residential resale value. This may make the maintenance of such tenant housing unaffordable, or may discourage the rehabilitation of existing housing on farms, thus further exacerbating the lack of affordable housing for farm labor. The County should take all necessary steps to allow such tenant housing to either be treated as Land Use Tax eligible or to be carried in the tax base at a value consistent with its use, rather than at residential market value. At the same time, the County should facilitate the conversion of unused farm buildings to farm labor housing by easing the administrative burden and allowing multifamily housing on bona fide operating farms.

Search for additional commercial by-right uses to be authorized for the rural economy

The current by-right commercial activities allowed in rural zoning districts should be carefully reviewed by the County to determine additional activities - which are commensurate with the maintenance and function of a rural countryside - that may be added as by-right uses (e.g., craft shops, nurseries, antique shops).

An ombudsman should be designated to serve as a direct link between farmers/rural businesses and County/state government relative to issues affecting the rural economy

To expedite rural economic initiatives, and to assist the landowners/farmers in improving the profitability of their operations and in entering into new endeavors appropriate to the rural economy, the County should designate an official available within planning and zoning functions to serve as a rural economic development ombudsman. This individual would serve as a direct link between farmers and other rural businesses, working to minimize regulatory delays, avoid the imposition of urban interpretations of standards, and expedite resolution of administrative problems with County or state government in the planning, initiation, or conduct of their rural economic enterprise. It is imperative that the ombudsman occupy a position which allows an independent voice and access to top levels of administration.

The expansion of Loudoun's rural economy cannot occur simply with "business as usual". We must look to the future with new initiatives, alternative businesses and strategies, and work to achieve the same leadership position in technology for the rural economy as we have achieved in other areas of economic development.

II. Recommendations for New Initiatives Most Likely to Result in Significant Increases in the Rural Economy

Include the Equine Industry as a Fundamental Component of Rural Economic Development and Provide for its Expansion

Based on the latest survey figures, 20,000 horses

- 30 percent of the horses in Northern Virginia
- are located in Loudoun County. Loudoun horse owners spend \$78 million per year in support of the horse. The equine industry is the largest agricultural employer in Loudoun County. The Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center, near Leesburg, is one of the nation's leading veterinary research, teaching and treatment centers. Loudoun County is the location of major national equine associations. Despite these factors, the County has given little official recognition or nurture to this critical sector of the rural economy.

The horse industry must play a critical role in the achievement of all of the objectives for growth and maintenance of Loudoun's rural economy. In support of this critical rural sector, the County is urged to develop public equestrian-related infrastructure. It should facilitate a countywide horse trail network in Loudoun parks. The County should also consider the development of equestrian facilities -- such as a show ring, cross country course, exercise ring or other related features in at least one of its

parks -- to facilitate public accessibility to equine activities and to encourage growth in equine industry participation.

Agricultural District eligibility should be expanded to include all equine-related activity sites, and the County should begin immediate efforts to seek the elimination of state sales and use taxes on bona fide equine business transactions.

Recruit agricultural biotechnology companies for demonstration ventures and relocation to Loudoun County

Loudoun's proximity in the Washington metropolitan area and the Federal government place it in an advantageous position as a site for the development and demonstration of biotech products.

Leverage Loudoun's locational advantages to become an important testing ground for agricultural biotech activity

Through the designated rural economic development function in the County government, the County should aggressively target Federal funding for biotechnology demonstration projects. At the same time, the County should initiate a biotechnology industry study aimed at attracting agriculturally-related biotechnology companies to Loudoun County. This industry study should identify target firms for recruitment, develop strategies to attract such business, and propose possible incentives to ensure their location in or relocation to Loudoun County. With the implementation of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, as recommended in a subsequent section of this report, the County will be in a position to ensure available land for such firms at a price which makes a Loudoun location very attractive.

Sponsor educational and /or promotional events relative to biotechnology

Through its rural economic development arm, the County should sponsor a symposium on biotechnology in order to promote agricultural development in Loudoun. Such a symposium could be conducted in cooperation with an institution of higher education, for example, The George Washington University - Virginia Campus, or other area colleges and universities or a consortium thereof. This symposium would introduce biotech opportunities - "pharming" - to Loudoun farmers and landowners, while serving as a kick-off to Loudoun's drive to establish itself as a rural economy open for biotech opportunities. The participation of representatives from biotech firms in such a symposium could also serve as a favorable introduction of Loudoun to these firms.

Create an "educational park" for biotech demonstration and education

In conjunction with the demonstration farm previously suggested in this report which focused on commercial agriculture of high-value crops, there should be a special emphasis on new discoveries in biotechnology, where people of all occupations can learn about such innovation and consider their practical applications in rural Loudoun.

Develop a telecommunications plan which considers all of the needs of the rural economy, while maintaining a sensitivity for the rural landscape and the tourism industry

The County should carefully develop and implement a telecommunications infrastructure and capabilities plan for rural Loudoun to enable rural businesses to benefit from new opportunities and markets provided by electronic communications. Rather than rely on the unplanned, uncoordinated placement of telecommunication facilities proposed by the industry, the County should carefully plan a system which will provide complete wireless coverage in rural Loudoun. The plan should ensure that Loudoun's towns are provided with the highest level of bandwidth capacity. This plan could prove to be of great benefit in the process of review and approval process of telecommunications structures in Loudoun, and could place the County in the position of controlling coverage as opposed to merely responding-often with no real technical knowledge or advice-to opportunistic initiatives of the industry.

At the same time, the County should consider opportunities to derive revenues from telecom infrastructure concessions. There may be significant revenue opportunities in County ownership of sites and towers with usage leased to communications firms. Neighboring jurisdictions have already taken advantage of these possibilities.

As an integral part of its overall telecommunications plan, the County should encourage the development of an electronic commerce network to link business activity in rural Loudoun with other markets and suppliers. The plan, which could also offer the blueprint to integrate the rural community through electronic networks, is discussed in [Appendix E](#).

Recruit Appropriate New Businesses for Location in a Rural Setting

The County should develop a clear marketing plan to attract appropriate new business and grow existing businesses in the rural setting

The County should immediately conduct a feasibility analysis to determine business types that are most likely to benefit from locating in rural Loudoun and which, in turn, will most benefit the rural economy.

The analysis should consider strengths, weaknesses and disincentives to such locations and develop incentive packages which will encourage orderly growth in the rural economy. It should identify and target specific businesses which are most appropriate and identify the supportive infrastructure required for relocation or expansion to rural settings. At the same time, the analysis should examine the existing rural business base and determine what opportunities exist for the support and expansion of new market and supplier relationships.

Support Loudoun's Towns in Furthering Their Business Development Efforts

Functioning, fiscally healthy towns are a vital component of the rural economy. They provide the necessary business support on which much of the rural economy depends. They offer convenient access to the rural consumer. They offer a small-town lifestyle attractive to many and the services vital to the support of tourism.

The County should examine and strengthen its relationships with its towns, particularly in the area of business development

The County should work to strengthen the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT) by bringing it into a more active voice in the planning process and economic development initiatives. Towns will continue to be focal points of supportive infrastructure for business development and tourism, and they should be active participants in the County's efforts.

COLT, through the towns, should work to extract the most relevant and appropriate components of Certified Local Government and Main Street-type programs in order to provide the towns with strategic and tactical assistance. The County needs to develop a partnership with the towns to provide the infrastructure and technical expertise necessary for the appropriate development of urban growth areas.

Support the Loudoun Tourism Council's Efforts to Promote Authentic Rural Tourism and Active Recreation Experiences in Loudoun

The role of the Loudoun Tourism Council (LTC) is vital to the health and growth of the rural economy. The County should fully support the LTC's initiatives to promote the rural character as a significant part of the visitor experience. At the same time, the County should work to assist in the recruitment and promotion of conferences and meetings in historic and rural settings and in country inns and B&B's. It should continue to encourage rural businesses to participate in themed visitor packages for groups and tourism events such as farm tours. The expansion of such tourism events could be encouraged if the County made available group liability insurance coverage to participating property owners at a reasonable cost.

Provide Targeted Technical Assistance for Business Start-ups

The County should provide assistance in business planning and feasibility studies and identify appropriate sources for such assistance. This, coupled with previous recommendations for an ombudsman to assist in coordinating with County and state agencies, as well as a biotechnology demonstration, may encourage the initiation of new enterprises within the rural economy.

III. Recommendations to Secure the Natural Resource Base of Loudoun's Rural Land

A thriving rural economy can exist only where there are adequate resources—a critical mass of rural/agricultural land and a plentiful, low-cost water supply. The beginning point of any plan to maintain and grow the rural economy must be, therefore, to secure those natural resource assets of rural Loudoun in order that it may: 1) retain its rural character; 2) accommodate enhanced agricultural production; 3) offer opportunities for alternative rural enterprises; and, 4) continue to attract increasing levels of tourism. Today, this natural resource base is not only threatened, it is disappearing to residential subdivisions at an alarming rate. Unless immediate actions are taken to secure the rural resource base, it will seriously impair our ability to build a robust, profitable, and self-sustaining 21st Century rural economy.

Securing that resource base must be our first priority. The Task Force has heard testimony from leaders of business and industry in Loudoun's new technology sector who have declared that a linchpin of Loudoun's overall economic development effort is the rural character of the County and the quality of life created by that rural

character. Thus, securing our rural resource base has positive impacts well beyond the rural economy itself.

Ensure that Loudoun's "countryside" retains its rural character

Create rural performance standards for residential development that will promote greater protection for and more compatible use of Loudoun's rural resource base

To reserve a critical mass of open land for rural-based businesses, agriculture, or conservation purposes, the County should immediately implement performance standards for Loudoun's rural area.

Current A-3 zoning, which embraces the majority of Loudoun's rural land, makes A-3 grid subdivision the simplest means of residential development of large tracts of land in rural areas. Such grid subdivision effectively removes the entire tract from productive economic use. Further, current A-3 zoning applies urban standards to rural subdivisions. This results in inappropriate placement of houses, a proliferation of cul-de-sacs and the paving of more, and wider, streets than necessary. Perversely, the same zoning makes alternative means of development that are more compatible with the rural environment more difficult and, therefore, more time-consuming and expensive.

The Task Force urges the County to establish performance standards for conventional A-3 residential development with all due diligence. Such standards should encourage the retention of open space in contiguous parcels suitable for economic production.

The County should also establish rural performance standards in A-3 districts for the location of buildings to be used for other than agriculture. These standards should require the identification of desirable reserve areas, such as best agricultural soils, riparian buffers, aquifers and recharge areas, wooded areas, difficult soils, slopes, scenic views, and other natural or man-made features such as stone walls.

Incentives should be created to encourage building placement in other than reserve areas, thus protecting tourism assets and preserving the rural character of the countryside. A more complete discussion of the concept of rural performance standards is contained in [Appendix F](#).

Recognize that the maintenance of a rural character through the continued use of Loudoun farms for agricultural uses is critical to Loudoun's cultural heritage-based tourism industry

While many other measures may be taken to retain the rural character of Loudoun's agricultural lands, the retention of significant portions of those lands for agricultural purposes is essential to maintaining a viable countryside which continues to attract tourism, and which protects the quality of life assets which give Loudoun a competitive advantage in the attraction of quality businesses. Moreover, agricultural lands produce the highest level of net revenue to the County, even at Land Use Tax rates, since they consume so little in County support. At the same time, agricultural lands are the very heart of a rural economy. While the sustainability of traditional farming is questionable, as pointed out in the previous recommendation, the Task Force believes that farming can regain its vitality and continue to be a vital component of the rural landscape and economy.

Give greater recognition to the horse industry and equestrian activities as a major component of the rural economy, and afford equine husbandry the same benefits and encouragement extended to other forms of agriculture

The current Land Use Tax treatment of land used for equestrian purposes or horse pasture is to require that horses be held for sale or otherwise used commercially in order for the land to qualify for the most advantageous tax base. As shown in [Appendix G](#), the equine industry in Loudoun County is a significant contributor to the rural economy, and should, therefore, be afforded every opportunity to grow. Further, the maintenance of pastures-even for pleasure horses-retains such land in open space, thus providing net tax revenue and enhancing both tourism opportunities and the rural character. By including pastureland which is maintained under best management practices (as recognized by the Soil & Water Conservation District) in the lowest Land Use Tax base category, increased horse ownership may be encouraged, and landowners may be encouraged to keep land in pasture which could otherwise give way to residential development. In addition to the significant direct economic contributions of the horse industry to Loudoun's economy, the use of land for pasture and equine pursuits is highly valuable in supporting and building Loudoun's tourism industry, and in retaining appreciable blocs of our natural resources free of more costly development.

Adopt additional A-3 by-right uses and remove unnecessary use-oriented impediments to encourage adaptive use of farm buildings and farm lands and to create new opportunities for rural activities consistent with maintenance of the rural countryside

A careful review of by-right uses in agriculturally zoned areas should be conducted to remove impediments to adaptive use of existing farm buildings and land. Examples of by-right uses that would be compatible with the rural countryside are restaurants, craft shops, nurseries and antique shops. At the same time, the County should carefully examine related siting standards such as setbacks, paving, road requirements and parking to determine if they are appropriate to the countryside. All too often, urban standards are applied to rural uses to the detriment of the countryside.

The County should create incentives to promote and assist in the preservation and reclamation of farm buildings and structures in order to ensure availability for future agricultural use, while at the same time providing the ingredients critical to the visual character of rural Loudoun

Many farm buildings in rural Loudoun are falling into disrepair or being abandoned because they are no longer needed in the current agricultural use of the land. The maintenance of these buildings is critical both for tourism and to retain the overall rural character of the area. Virginia tax credits for the rehabilitation of farm buildings are available to land owners, but the program is currently underutilized in Loudoun. The County should develop an information program to make the advantages of state tax credits more available to land owners.

In addition to encouraging the use of such programs, the County should provide its own incentives for the restoration and preservation of these buildings. One of the difficulties confronting the rural land owner who no longer has a use for a particular farm structure is that so long as it is maintained or restored, its assessed value increases and, therefore, real estate taxes increase. We recommend that the County implement a tax abatement program for the restoration and/or maintenance of farm structures (including, but not limited to, barns, sheds, corn cribs, run-in sheds, silos, board or stone fences, and spring houses). Such tax abatement programs should provide, as a minimum, no increase in assessed property value related to the improved and/or restored structure. As a greater incentive, it is recommended that the County immediately examine the possibility of removing from the real estate tax base for a period of time [10-15 years] any restored farm structure used in connection with a bona fide agricultural enterprise.

Retain the most usable agricultural land for crop/livestock production

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to make it much easier to accomplish permanent Large-Lot Waiver subdivision, thereby encouraging alternatives to A-3 development, and reducing residential density

By making Large-Lot Waiver subdivision a much easier, quicker alternative to A-3 development, landowners who must sell their land to realize equity, support retirement, retire debt, satisfy estate tax liabilities, etc., may be encouraged to take this approach. Simplicity and efficiency of the large-lot subdivision process can produce savings in legal, engineering and administrative costs to more than offset the possible financial opportunity of greater density.

The County should consider a "sliding scale" set of requirements applicable to Large-Lot Waiver subdivision: the larger the lots, the fewer mandatory requirements, and the more efficient the approval process. In exchange for such reduced requirements, however, all parcels in such large-lot subdivisions must carry with them permanent open space easements (which in itself provides substantial Federal tax benefits).

The County should also examine such lot requirements as road frontage, dimensional ratios, etc. to assure that urban or suburban standards are not applied to large rural lots. The minimum lot size for large-lot developments should be ten (10) acres, with appropriate administrative incentives to encourage even larger lot subdivision.

Review and strengthen the opportunities for cluster residential development by creating options so attractive in their implementation that A-3 grid subdivision patterns or other development options resulting in higher densities and/or requiring more infrastructure will not be utilized

One possible approach considered by the Task Force to encourage alternatives to A-3 grid development in the rural areas would be to increase the roll-back period for property in the Land Use Tax program. We would suggest that in connection with this increase, the roll-back period could be significantly reduced if cluster development or another more rural-sensitive alternative is used in lieu of the A-3 grid. This recommendation would require legislative action at the state level.

The cluster residential option is by-right in the A-3 and A-10 zoning districts. The administrative/review requirements should be carefully examined to ascertain that the election to a cluster development option does not subject the project to any greater administrative requirements than the A-3 grid option, and-preferably-fewer requirements wherever possible. Lot sizes in clusters should be permissible to as small as one-quarter acre, and the maximum size should not exceed one acre - with the exception of conservancy lots.

Carefully crafted design standards which incentivize the preservation, reservation, and use of agricultural land and natural resources, while allowing the land owner to realize currently zoned densities should be adopted. All conservancy space should be contiguous, to the maximum extent possible, in order that it may be effectively used for agriculture, husbandry or other appropriate rural use. Such conservancy space could be held in separate ownership, or in common, by all owners of cluster lots. In order to incentivize the maximization of conservancy space, it is recommended that the County consider the elimination of roll-back taxes on the portion of the cluster which is retained in open space. It would be important, however, that the conservancy spaces embrace agricultural, natural, or historic/cultural resources in order to qualify for such roll-back exemptions. Without endangering the public health and safety, joint wells and eased septic fields should be allowed in these clusters.

The current Rural Village Ordinance should be carefully reviewed to determine its appropriateness for use in rural areas, and to assess whether it is, in fact, an impediment to the maintenance of a rural economy

The Rural Village Ordinance, particularly as amended to provide greater density bonuses, although originally adopted as an alternative to A-3 grid subdivision, may, in fact, contribute to greater residential development of the countryside. By allowing-even encouraging-the creation of new villages/towns, the County is intensifying the demand for capital improvements in the rural areas. Capital improvements, such as improved roads, may have the effect of creating increased pressure for more residential units accessible by such improved roads. This demand causes increases in land values and, correspondingly, increased taxes which may make agricultural pursuits less profitable and, thus, less desirable. Further, the failure of the County to limit central water or sewage treatment facilities may allow the expansion of such utilities beyond the boundaries of the approved Rural Village, thereby encouraging additional consumption of the rural landscape by residential housing.

There are seven incorporated towns in the rural area, and Loudoun's Comprehensive Plans long have called for the encouragement of growth in the urban growth areas surrounding the towns. Clearly, the Rural Village Ordinance places rural land in competition with the towns in terms of growth. Further, we ask whether the County has considered the ramifications to the rural economy if built-out Rural Villages decide, themselves, to become towns with their own accompanying urban growth areas. Rural Loudoun could well become a series of towns connected to one another by urban growth areas. That would be fatal to the rural economy.

Loudoun County should immediately begin the process of establishing a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program to retain land essential to agriculture and to encourage its agricultural use, for the protection of natural resources, to protect assets essential to the tourism industry, and to

maintain the quality of life which gives Loudoun County its competitive advantage in attracting appropriate new business entities

The use of Purchased Development Rights to achieve agricultural reserve areas, protect natural resources, reduce residential densities, and retain tourism assets has been implemented successfully in conjunction with conservation easements in Virginia and in many other jurisdictions throughout the country. PDRs must play a key role in Loudoun's protection of its quality of life for its citizens and in maintaining and growing its rural economy. Basically, a PDR program converts land to its resource value through the voluntary purchase and legal retirement of the land's development rights.

By allowing the landowner to realize the equity in rural land over and above its base agricultural value, a PDR program will permit farmers to retire debt, fund retirement, settle inheritance taxes, fund improvements, or even provide their own capital financing for the continuation of agricultural pursuits. At the same time, it will assure the availability of the land for agriculture or other compatible economic uses in the future. Further, land for which the development rights have been sold, can still remain in commerce at its base value, which can encourage new entrants into agricultural pursuits, or other appropriate rural economic endeavors.

The County should carefully consider the types of conservation easements to be placed on property after the purchase of development rights. Prime agricultural land should be retained in economically viable parcels for continued agricultural use, although changing technologies of agriculture may require smaller parcels for economic production. Prime natural resource areas and scenic or cultural assets which form the underpinnings of our tourism industry should also be subject to protection through a PDR program. The availability of appropriate sites for campus-style corporate enterprises in the rural setting should also be considered, for such corporate "retreats"- which are already recognized in County zoning ordinances, though they carry with them regulatory impediments-need to be considered an integral part of growing the rural economy. Accordingly, any PDR program should carefully plan for the acquisition of development rights on identified potential corporate campus sites in order to assure their availability in the future.

Recent Federal tax law changes have provided major estate tax relief for acreage on which conservation easements have been placed. Individuals in high tax brackets can achieve meaningful reductions in tax liability by the voluntary placement of conservation easements on their property. If adjoining property has been removed from residential development by a PDR program-that is, if a clear future has been established-such landowners may be much more willing to avail themselves of these Federal tax benefits by voluntarily placing their properties under conservation easements, protecting agricultural and tourism assets at no cost to the County.

The most visible and successful PDR program in Virginia is the Virginia Beach initiative. We recommend that the County immediately begin its efforts to define and construct a PDR program. We strongly urge the Board of Supervisors to define the program and its financing. We believe this is one of the most important vehicles currently available for fostering the rural economy in the 21st Century. [Appendix I](#) of this report provides a proposal for a one-year pilot PDR program.

Potential sources of funding for a PDR program should be considered. The quickest means by Rural Economic Development Task Force: [Appendix I](#) Proposal for a One-year Pilot Program for the Purchase of Development Rights which such a program can be financed is through the issuance of bonds. The Virginia Beach program offers an innovative means of financing the program through the issuance of negotiable bonds to the property owners, with minimal cash outlays by the local governmental entity.

Roll-back taxes collected in connection with rural property development should be earmarked for PDR use. Additionally, there is already a recommendation pending before the Board of Supervisors for the establishment of a land transfer tax of up to one percent of the purchase price of transferred properties. While the pending proposal would earmark a significant portion of these tax proceeds for school construction, we believe that the economic benefits to the County of a viable PDR program would justify the use of a portion of such funds for the purchase of development rights.

Strengthen the Land Use Tax Program as a tool for farmland preservation, for natural resource management and protection, and to encourage the expansion of the equine industry in Loudoun County

While the Land Use Tax Program is clearly an important tool in the building of an overall rural economy, it alone does not appear to be sufficient to maintain and support the rural infrastructure. The program should be strengthened and expanded, and administrative and enforcement capabilities should be supplemented to assure that the program accomplishes the fiscal management objectives set forth in the state legislation. The Land Use Tax Program, as authorized by state legislation, includes stewardship for woodlands, stream valleys, meadowland, and water quality. Loudoun's Land Use Tax Ordinance excludes these uses. These exclusions should be immediately corrected. We recommend the implementation of the following two critical modifications to the Land Use Tax Program at the earliest possible time: First, the roll-back period for computation of taxes upon conversion from eligible use should be expanded, with lesser roll-back periods dependent upon the use to which the land is converted and/or the manner of implementation of the new use. As an example, straight A-3 residential grid development should be subject to the full expanded roll-back requirement, while residential development which maintains open space, preserves natural resources, or reduces density on the land would pay correspondingly fewer years of roll-back taxes. The conversion to commercial use which contributes to the rural economy in an appropriate manner should also be subject to reduced roll-back tax liability. Again, this would require legislative action at the state level.

Second, in conjunction with the increase in the tax roll-back period associated with the conversion of agricultural lands, the County should consider a reduction in the current Land Use Tax Program rates in order to make the conduct of agricultural pursuits profitable-and thus encourage this more appropriate use of the land in support of the rural economy. As we face declining world commodity prices and increasing production prices, Land Use Tax relief may well be a key factor in allowing the continuation of agricultural operations in Loudoun County.

Protect, preserve and enhance key natural resources

Immediately implement the rural and agricultural policies previously adopted in the County's Comprehensive Plan by appropriate ordinances, standards and regulations

Loudoun County's Comprehensive Plan is eloquent in its support of agricultural practices and the rural character of western Loudoun, and firmly establishes as County policy the support of both agriculture and the rural landscape. To a large extent, this has been overlooked, and the County has failed to provide ordinances

and standards which, in fact, implement this policy. When such implementation has been attempted - e.g. the Rural Village Ordinance - change after change to the ordinance has been made to the benefit of the developer and to the detriment of the countryside, until the implementation may bring about results which are, in fact, contrary to the County's stated policies.

The County should immediately begin to implement fully the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including immediately undertaking an inventory of Loudoun's natural resources.

Fully implement a program for the management and protection of natural resources as provided for in the Loudoun County Comprehensive Plan

Although the Comprehensive Plan addresses the management and protection of Loudoun's natural resources, much remains to be done in the implementation of the policy. Such recommendations as the development of rural performance standards, the encouragement of development options other than A-3 grid, and the expansion of Land Use Tax eligibility will certainly aid in protecting Loudoun's natural resources. These actions alone, however, are insufficient.

In the absence of a Department of Natural Resources, the County should assign oversight responsibility to a County department. Its function should be to identify key natural resources and to develop standards to protect the natural landscape for the benefit of Loudoun County citizens. This would further the vitality of the rural economy, particularly as related to agriculture and tourism.

Develop and implement policies which will ensure and protect the availability of adequate water resources to support and grow the rural economy

Adequate water is essential to the sustenance and growth of a rural economy. It is key to any growth in areas of high-value vegetable and small fruit and orchard production, greenhouse production, and biotech production. It is vital to the creation of corporate retreats and business campuses. Without adequate water supplies, we cannot sustain or grow the County's equine industry or other animal husbandry ventures.

The County should develop -- as soon as possible and availing itself of matching funds from United State Geological Survey (USGS) or other public institution -- a complete inventory of water resources in rural Loudoun. Such inventory must clearly identify water recharge areas as well as resource locations. Based upon this inventory, the County must adopt appropriate means of protecting and improving such resources and, on a continuing basis, continue the monitoring of water resources both as to quality and availability.

Encourage and promote the establishment of voluntary overlay Historic or Rural Districts in rural Loudoun

Tourism is, and must continue to be, a major component of the rural economy, as shown in [Appendix H](#). Overlay districts based on historic or scenic assets encourage the creation of well-defined tourist destinations and, of themselves, form the basis for the creation of promotional campaigns which serve to increase tourist interest and visitation.

The creation and promotion of theme-related tourist packages can assist in increasing tourism and, correspondingly, spawn an increase in tourism attractions and facilities. This is critical to attainment of the growth objectives for Loudoun's rural economy.

Conclusion

The recommendations of the Rural Economic Development Task Force are broad in scope and dependent upon action from both the private and public sectors of our community. They are based on findings from state, local and national sources that were brought to the discussions by a diverse group of citizens representing all aspects of Loudoun's rural enterprises. The Task Force firmly believes that the implementation of the Rural Economic Development Plan as a whole will result in a doubling of Loudoun's rural economy in a decade. Achieving that goal will, in turn, produce fiscal benefits to the County through enhanced corporate recruitment, more cost-effective provision of services, and a quality of life profile that is unmatched in the Washington metropolitan region for its diversity.

Two themes are clearly evident throughout the report. One is the immediate threat to the rural resources and support services that are the very infrastructure of a rural economy, and the other is the current window of opportunity to farm profitability and to initiate new rural enterprises. In essence, this report is a call to action for residents, corporate citizens, and public officials. If each of the players takes a responsibility for what they can do to implement this plan, the message will go out to the region and, indeed, the nation that Loudoun County has a unique combination of high-tech and rural businesses that complement each other.

Some of the recommendations can be enacted immediately; some are simply a new emphasis of current goals and capabilities, such as providing opportunities for rural recapitalization and recruiting appropriate new businesses for location in a rural setting. Other recommendations are more long term. Some of them require the formation of public/private partnerships, and some require a direct investment of public money. The Rural Economic Development Plan will become reality only if it is viewed in its entirety, and only if citizens, organizations, businesses, and government leaders work cooperatively toward the plan's goal. Many of the recommendations of this Task Force could be acted on by the Board of Supervisors now. Among those are recommendations relating to by-right uses in the A-3 zoning district, rural performance standards, preservation and enhancement of the Land Use Tax program, provisions of the Facilities Standards Manual and the Land Subdivision Development Ordinance.

Many of these recommendations can be addressed by the Board without any large expenditure of money. The Rural Economic Development Task Force stands ready to work with the Board of Supervisors and staff to help get this job done in a relatively short time frame. The future of rural Loudoun is at stake here - inaction is unacceptable. The Rural Economic Development Task Force urges the Board to proceed with all due speed on the recommendations herein submitted.

Appendices

The attached appendices embody the background data and specific recommendations which underlie and support the actual text of the Rural Economic Development Task Force's report. These appendices reflect contributions by both the Task Force members and by interested parties who have served as resources to the group. The contributions of the Resource Group are greatly appreciated by the Task Force and our report is enriched by their collective efforts.

Many of the views and a great deal of the data that surfaced during Task Force discussions are contained within these appendices. They provide further detail and

serve as a preliminary step for the implementation stage of the Rural Economic Development Plan.

While the Task Force decided not to develop fully actual policy implementation measures in its report, the appendices serve as a reflection of the many ideas and level of detail that were discussed in conjunction with the actual recommendations. The appendices are illustrative in many cases of the kinds of measures the Task Force thinks should happen to achieve the three major goals of farming with greater profitability, developing new initiatives to increase the rural economy, and securing the natural resource base. The Task Force believes that after further and complete analysis, the solutions for expanding Loudoun's rural economy may well lie within these appendices. APPENDICES:

- Rural Economic Task Force Appendix A: Rural Economic Development Task Force Members.
- Rural Economy Task Force Appendix B: Overview of Loudoun's Rural Economy.
- Rural Economy Task Force Appendix C: Agricultural Growth Areas Offering Significant Profit Potential.
- Rural Economy Task Force Appendix D: Policy Initiatives to Curtail Regulatory Constraints on The Rural Economy.
- Rural Economy Task Force Appendix E: Rural Electronic Network - AGNET: Increasing Farm Profitability Using Internet Appendix.
- Rural Economy Task Force Appendix F: Rural Performance Standards.
- Rural Economy Task Force Appendix G: The Equine Industry in Loudoun County.
- Rural Economy Task Force Appendix H: Tourism and the Rural Economy.
- Rural Economy Task Force Appendix I: Proposal for a One-year Pilot Program for the Purchase of Development Rights.